

Serial No. 09,510,667

Art Unit: 2828

Response to Office Action of July 2, 2003

REMARKS

Claims 1-20 are pending in this application. Claims 4-19 have been allowed. Claims 1-3 and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph as being indefinite. Claims 1-3 and 20 were also rejected as being anticipated by Das. Reconsideration in view of the foregoing amendments and following remarks is respectfully requested.

Applicants thank the examiner and her supervisor for the courtesy of the telephone interview of September 3, 2003. During the interview, the rejections were discussed. The examiner's supervisor suggested that claim 1 be amended to include a wherein clause which clarified the functioning of the dedusting unit. He further acknowledged that the cited art did not disclose the elements of claim1.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of claims 1-3 and 20 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Claim 1 clearly recites the structure of the dust repelling unit including (1) a high voltage duct and (2) a closed wire loop. The Office Action states, in support of the rejection, that “[t]here is no structural relationship recited in the claim to further define how the high voltage dust is connected to the dust repelling unit or a laser optical element.” This statement has no meaning in the context of the present invention. Dust (high voltage or otherwise) is not connected to the dust repelling unit nor the laser optical element. Dust, however, is known to be present in a gas laser. The dust repelling unit, as recited in claim 1, is positioned in front of a laser optical element to prevent dust from reaching the laser optical element. The high voltage on the closed wire loop creates an electric field which repels charged dust particles. In light of the comments made by the examiner's supervisor, Applicants have amended claim 1 to clarify the nature of the dust repelling unit in repelling dust. In particular, as

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recited in amended claim 1, when the dust repelling unit is connected to a high voltage power supply, the closed wire loop creates an electric field for charging and repelling dust. This amendment merely clarifies the nature of the present invention and does not raise new issues. It also puts the claim in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request entry of this amendment.

Furthermore, contrary to the statement in the Office Action, Figs. 4 and 5 show the closed wire loop at reference 302. These figures show the shape and connection of the closed wire loop to the high voltage duct, exactly as recited in claim 1.

In light of the foregoing, Applicants submit that the rejection of claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, has been overcome and that claim 1 is in condition for allowance. Claims 2, 3 and 20 depend from claim 1 and were rejected solely based upon the language of claim 1. Therefore, these claims are also in condition for allowance.

Claims 1-3 and 20 were also rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Das. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection because the structures recited in claims 1-3 and 20 are not disclosed, taught or suggested by Das. As noted above, claim 1 recites a dust repelling unit to be placed in a gas laser unit. The dust repelling unit comprises a high-voltage duct and a closed wire loop at one end of the high voltage duct. Das, on the other hand, does not include such a dust repelling unit nor the structures recited in the claim. The Office Action identifies various elements in Das which allegedly correspond to the high-voltage duct (105) and the closed wire loop (98). These elements do not disclose, teach or suggest the present claimed invention. Element 105 is a high voltage power source for an electrode of an excimer laser. It is not applicable to a dust repelling

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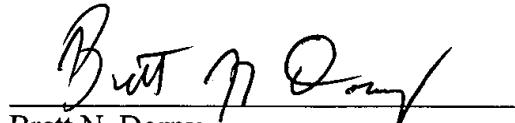
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unit. Element 98 is a spring. It is not a closed wire loop, is not connected to a high voltage duct, and does not operate to repel dust. Therefore, claim 1 patentably distinguishes over the cited art and is in condition for allowance. Claims 2, 3 and 20 depend from claim 1 and are allowable for at least the same reasons.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the claims of the present application are in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the rejections and favorable action are respectfully requested. If the examiner has any questions regarding this amendment or the application in general, she is invited to telephone Applicant's attorney at the number below so that prosecution of this application may be expedited.

Respectfully submitted,



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